

Message Text

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71

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 NEA-14 ISO-00 IGA-02 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15

AEC-11 AID-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00 CIEP-02 COME-00 DODE-00

FPC-01 H-03 INR-10 INT-08 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 OMB-01

PM-07 RSC-01 SAM-01 SCI-06 SP-03 SS-20 STR-08 TRSE-00

DRC-01 FEA-02 /176 W

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R 031730Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1815

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBSSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 7296

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENGR, IN

SUBJECT: "SAGAR SAMRAT" UNABLE TO SET UP IN HEAVY SEAS;

RETURNS TO HARBOR

REF: A) BOMBAY 1209 (NOTAL) B) NEW DELHI 6435

1. OFFSHORE COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE L.T. GARRETT INFORMED BOMBAY CONGEN MAY 31 THAT THE GOI-OWNED OIL AND NATURAL GAS COMMISSION'S "SAGAR SAMRAT" WAS UNABLE TO SET UP AT ITS SECOND BOMBAY HIGH WELL SITE 300 METERS FROM H-1-1'847(REF B) BECAUSE OF HEAVY SEAS. TO PREVENT IRREPARABLE DAMAGE TO THE RIG, THE DRILLSHIP RETURNED TO BOMBAY HARBOR MAY 29.

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2. FOLLOWING THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF WELL NUMBER H-1-1-1 (REF B), THE DRILL SHIP MOVED TO BOMBAY HARBOR FOR MINOR REPAIRS BEFORE PROCEEDING TO THE NEXT WELL SITE. WHILE THESE JGPARIIS COULD HAVE BEEN POSTPONED WITHOUT HARM TO THE DRILL, GARRETT WAS ASSURED BY THE GOI THAT THE JOB WOULD BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO MAY 21 AND WOULD THUS BE BACK OVER THE BOMBAY HIGH BEFORE THE ONSET OF THE AREA'S MONSOON STORMS. TYPICALLY, DELAYS FOLLOWED, BUT REPAIRS WERE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE (UNTIL MAY 25) ON THE BASIS OF REGULARLY-RECEIVED WEATHER REPORTS PREDICTING CALM WEATHER WITH NO DIFFICULTIES FORECAST. GARRETT SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THE INDIAN WEATHER BUREAU "COMPLETELY MISSED" A MAJOR STORM FRONT THAT HAD MOVED INTO THE ARABIA SEA AND BY MAY 26 THE RIG WAS ENCOUNTERING WAVES UP TO FOURTEEN FEET, WITH NO ABATEMENT IN SIGHT. (COMMENT: WHILE THE SAGAR SAMRAT IS CAPABLE OF WITHSTANDING REASONABLY HEAVY SEAS IN ITS TRAVEL CONFIGURATION AND GALE FORCE SEAS IN ITS DRILLING POSITION, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO SAFELY ATTEMPT TO ELEVATE THE UNIT IN WAVES EXCEEDING SIX FEET IN HEIGHT.)

3. ALL INVOLVED (GOI AND OFFSHORE COMPANY OFFICIALS) ARE UNDERSTANDABLY FRUSTRATED OVER THIS TURN OF EVENTS.

S. THE EARLY MAY HARBOR REPAIR TIME WAS NOT MANDATORY IN THE FIRST PLACE (IT WAS ONLY AN "APPARENT" CONVENIENCE), AND IDLENESS IN THE HARBOR NOW IS IRRETRIEVABLE LOST TIME. PETROLEUM MINISTRY REP, DR. GOPAL RAMASWAMY, CONFIRMED GARRETT'S WEATHER REPORT AND SAID THAT THE SHIP'S CREW BELIEVES THE WIND PATTERNS ENCOUNTERED MAY 26-29 ARE THOSE OF THE SOUTHWEST MONSOON (EARLY, BUT THE MONSOONS NONETHELESS). THE WEATHER BUREAU DISAGREES (BUT, ACCORDING TO RAMASWAMY, "OUR WEATHER PEOPLE ARE FOOLS; HOW WOULD THEY KNOW?). IN ANY EVENT, THE SAGAR SAMRAT'S CREW CAN NOW ONLY WAIT AND HOPE FOR A 72-HOUR BREAK IN WHATEVER THE WEATHER IS. THEY WEREN'T THAT LUCKY LAST YEAR.

SCHNEIDER

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